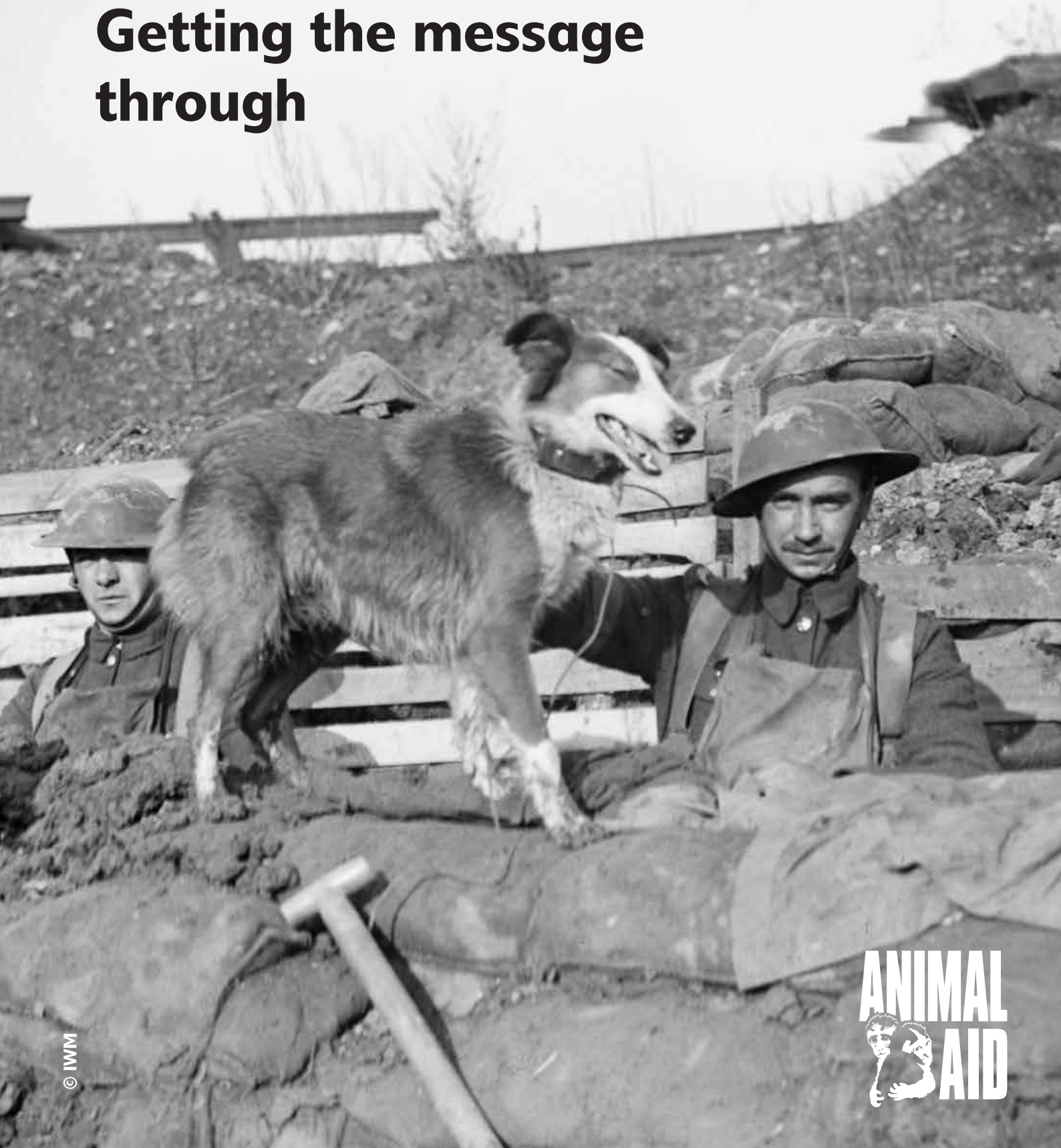


The Animals' War

History KS3: Lesson 7

Getting the message through





History KS3

Lesson 7: Getting the message through



Lesson Plan Duration: one hour

■ Context of Lesson/Key Ideas:

The Centenary of the First World War is an ideal opportunity to look at the role of animals during this time. Some animals were used during WWI to carry messages on the battlefield.

■ Aims and Objectives:

- Know that dogs and pigeons were considered vital as a means of battlefield communication in the trenches of WWI.
- Understand the hazards faced by animals who were used as messengers.
- Understand the technological developments that affected battlefield communications and that led to changes in the role of animals.

■ National Curriculum coverage:

- KSt3: The First World War. To inspire pupils' curiosity to know more about the past. To equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. Pupils should make connections, draw contrasts and analyse trends.

■ Resources (available as downloads from website):

- 1 Lesson 7 PowerPoint slides
- 2 Resource sheet 1: Image of DORA Homing Pigeons poster
- 3 Resource sheet 2: Image of pigeon message canister and dog collar
- 4 Resource sheet 3: battlefield communication cards*
- 5 PowerPoint 3: *Messengers*
- 6 Factsheet: *Animals in WWI part two – Messengers and Protectors*

* Free laminated sets of cards available from Animal Aid.

■ Learning tasks:

Starter (5 minutes)

- Display one of the images on the first six slides of the Lesson 7 PowerPoint presentation (dog leaping trench, pigeon loft, dog and pigeon messenger canisters or DORA poster).
- Ask students to get into pairs and to study either:
 - 1) Resource sheet 1 (DORA poster), or Resource sheet 2 (dog and pigeon message canisters).
 - or 2) the object(s) displayed on the whiteboard
- Ask them to discuss what the objects on the sheet and/or on the screen are.
- Gather feedback and discuss.



Main (50 minutes)

1) Messenger cards (15 minutes);

- Ask students to get into pairs or groups of three or four. Provide each group with a set of battlefield communication cards :
 1. Runner on foot
 2. Rider on horse
 3. Signals using flags (semaphore)
 4. Landline telephone
 5. Wireless
 6. Carrier pigeon
 7. Messenger dog
 8. Voice
 9. Heliograph
- Ask students to:
 - Study the cards and arrange them firstly in order of speed and then in order of reliability.
 - List the advantages and disadvantages of each form of communication.
 - Decide which communication method they would use if they were cut off in no man's land during an attack, and why.
- Discuss why dogs and pigeons were used to carry messages on the battlefield in WWI.

2) Presentation (15 minutes);

- Show the *Messengers* PowerPoint to explain the use of messenger dogs and pigeons.

Discuss the Cher Ami story.

3) Research (10 minutes);

- Ask students to use the factsheet: *Animals in WWI part two – Messengers and Protectors* and/or internet, to investigate the hazards faced by the dogs and pigeons who were used to carry messages.

Plenary (5 minutes)

- Gather feedback and summarise the hazards faced by messenger animals in WWI.

Homework/extension

- a) Find out what happened to messenger animals when the war ended.
- or b) Find out how soldiers in the Second World War communicated on the battlefield. How had technology changed? How did this affect the role of animals?



Resource sheet 1 DORA Homing Pigeons Poster - source 1

DEFENCE OF THE REALM

Regulation 21A.

SHOOTING
HOMING PIGEONS.

Killing, Wounding or Molesting Homing Pigeons

Is punishable under the Defence of the Realm Regulations by

SIX MONTHS IMPRISONMENT OR £100 FINE.

The Public are reminded that Homing Pigeons are doing valuable work for the Government, and are requested to assist in the suppression of the shooting of these birds.

£5 REWARD

will be paid by the **NATIONAL HOMING UNION** for information leading to the conviction of any person **SHOOTING HOMING PIGEONS** the property of its Members.

Information should be given to the Police, Military Post, or to the Secretary of the Union, **C. C. PLACKETT,**
14. EAST PARADE, LEEDS.



Resource sheet 2

Identify these objects:

2a)



©IWM

a) What is this?

2b)



©IWM

b) What is this?



Resource sheet 3 Battlefield communication cards

1. Runner on foot



Speed: 8.3mph (or 100m in 27 seconds)
Range: One mile
Risk of being shot: Moderately high
Weaknesses: Runner likely to be slowed by obstacles such as shell holes, mud, barbed wire, etc.

2. Rider on horse



Speed: 25mph/40km/h (gallop)
Range: 2 miles (at gallop)
Risk of being shot: Very high
Weaknesses: Likely to be slowed by obstacles such as shell holes, mud, barbed wire, etc. Dependent on horses being available.

3. Signals using flags



Speed: Instant
Range: 0 - half mile (depending on visibility)
Risk of being shot: Very high
Weaknesses: Dependent on visibility and whether flags are available. Liable to give your position away and messages could be intercepted by the enemy.

4. Landline telephone



Speed: Instant
Range: Several miles
Risk of being shot: Low (although high when laying or repairing lines)
Weaknesses: Relies on cables, which were frequently broken by enemy artillery. Signallers often had to fix 40 cable breaks per day. Calls could be intercepted by the enemy.

5. Wireless



Speed: Instant
Range: 2 - 10 miles
Risk of being shot: Very low
Weaknesses: Recently invented, sets were large, heavy and unreliable. They were expensive and so there was a limited supply. Messages could be easily intercepted by the enemy.

6. Carrier pigeon



Speed: 50mph (80km/h)
Range: 100 miles (160km)
Risk of being shot: Moderately high
Weaknesses: Birds kept in cages on the battlefield suffered in terrible conditions. Limited number of pigeons were available. High chance birds could get lost in poor visibility.

7. Messenger dog



Speed: 10mph
Range: Several miles
Risk of being shot: Moderately high
Weaknesses: Dogs on the battlefield suffered terrible conditions. Dogs targeted by enemy snipers. Limited number of dogs were available.

8. Voice



Speed: Speed of sound
Range: 100m
Risk of being shot: Low to moderately high
Weaknesses: Very limited range, especially in the noise of the battlefield. Messages might be overheard by the enemy.

9. Heliograph



Speed: Speed of light
Range: 30 - 100 miles
Risk of being shot: Moderately high
Weaknesses: Flashes of light sent as morse code signals using a mirror. Heliographs work by line of sight – both ends of the system must be visible to one another at all times; only work in daylight and only in good weather conditions.